

place on the chart, which is the former Ansar al-Islam pocket. It is in Iraq. As this line shows, that camp is in a part of Iraq that Saddam Hussein did not control. In fact, this part of Iraq is controlled by the Kurds. The Kurds are our allies. So once again, this is a disturbing bit of information used in a way that I believe fundamentally misled people.

A second piece of intelligence was that Mohamed Atta, who was among the hijackers, supposedly met with the intelligence chief in Prague, in Czechoslovakia. That charge was repeated over and over.

Our intelligence agencies believe Mr. Atta was not in Prague at the time of that reported meeting. Instead, he was in the United States—again, evidence that simply does not support the case.

What we do know is that Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida organized that attack on the United States. That is who was responsible. That is who we should be going after.

The other thing that was asserted repeatedly was that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. I do not fault the administration for making that case because, frankly, I believed there were probably biological and chemical weapons. I believed it because we know that the previous U.N. inspectors had catalogued weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical weapons, but that was some years ago. Even then, there was no evidence that those weapons had been destroyed. So even though now we have not found them, I think it is understandable that people believed there were at least chemical and biological weapons.

The Soviet Union had biological and chemical weapons; we never attacked them. China had biological and chemical weapons; we did not attack them. North Korea has weapons of mass destruction, or at least they assert they do. We have not attacked them. In every one of those cases, we used containment. We used patience. We did not attack first.

In the case where we were attacked, we know who did that. It was not Iraq. It was not Iraqis. It was al-Qaida, led by Osama bin Laden.

It has now been 775 days since that attack on our country, and Osama bin Laden is still broadcasting tapes threatening Americans and our allies. It has been 775 days, and we have not brought him to justice. I believe that is the priority. I believe that should be our top goal. I believe we ought to find Osama bin Laden and the rest of the al-Qaida leadership and take them out.

Newsweek ran a story in which they identified a possible location in the Kunar Province between Afghanistan and Pakistan as a place where Osama bin Laden is reported to be hiding. This is a pretty small area of the country of Afghanistan, where they have narrowed it down through their investigative reporting as a place where Osama bin Laden is hiding.

What I find most disturbing is in that story, they said this:

... bin Laden appears to be not only alive, but thriving. And with America distracted in Iraq, and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf leery of stirring up an Islamist backlash, there is no large-scale military force currently pursuing the chief culprit in the 9/11 attacks...

I am here today to ask why not? Why is there not a large military force with an operation underway to find Osama bin Laden and to bring him to justice? That ought to be our top priority. If we have been distracted by Iraq, then that is exactly what this Senator feared when I voted against authorizing going to war against Iraq at this time. That is exactly what concerned this Senator, that a preemptive war against Iraq—a country that had a low level of threat against this country, according to our own intelligence agencies—has distracted us from going after the man and the organization that attacked this country. It was not Iraqis who attacked this country; it was al-Qaida that attacked this country. Saddam Hussein was not the leader of that operation, Osama bin Laden was the leader of that operation. It has been 775 days since that vicious attack on this country and we still have not brought him to justice.

What is far more disturbing to me is there is, apparently, no large scale military force currently pursuing the chief culprit in the 9/11 attacks. Why not? I think the American people deserve an answer to that question. I think the Members of this Chamber deserve an answer to that question. Why is there not a large-scale military operation underway to find Osama bin Laden and to hold him to account? That ought to be the priority. That ought to be in the highest interests of the national security of the United States.

Osama bin Laden engineered the attack on this country. I must say, last weekend, to see him in another tape, bragging about the damage he has done to this country—outrageous, absolutely outrageous. Let's go get Osama bin Laden and those who attacked this country. That ought to be our highest national security priority.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

DENISE GREENLAW RAMONAS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, the Senate works well when it is served by very competent and dedicated staff members—on our personal staff, the people who operate the elevators, the security people, the policemen, but most importantly our staff at the committee level and here on the floor of the Senate.

Over the past few years, I think most of the staff members know how much I have appreciated their good work because I have taken the time occasionally to say so and because I tried to make the Senate a family-friendly place. Although they may look like just part of the furniture, there are really some fine, dedicated people who spend long hours here who really live outside this Chamber. Sometimes I see members of our floor staff in other parts of the Capitol complex, or at Pentagon City, and I am shocked to see them out of the cave they work in. Far too often, we don't take the time to say "thank you" and "job well done" because you have made us look good, because you have served some State in our great Nation well, and because you made America a better place.

So I am here today to say thank you to one of our dedicated staff members who has now retired and is moving on to her next life—probably the third generation of her very important life—one who has served us well and one whom I will miss seeing on the floor of the Senate every day. That person is Denise Greenlaw Ramonas.

I first got to know Denise because she lives in my neighborhood, but also because she was such a competent assistant to PETE DOMENICI. I noticed her when Senator DOMENICI, one of the most able legislators in this body, would come to the floor to handle a budget resolution or piece of legislation, perhaps from the Subcommittee on Energy that he serves on of the appropriations committee or something on behalf of New Mexico. There was this obviously competent staff member working with him in the Senate. I learned to talk to her and listen to her when she was in the Senate with PETE DOMENICI.

Over the years, I got to know more about Denise. Denise is from Utah. She graduated from the University of Utah College of Law, receiving her juris doctorate degree. She also graduated magna cum laude from undergraduate school. She has had a number of outstanding experiences in her life including serving as a law clerk in a Houston law firm, one of the best in the state, the Boswell, O'Toole and Pickering law firm. She has been an instructor at the University of Utah College of Business. That clearly is an interesting experience. To be an instructor you have to know your subject matter and you get to work with young people. I have learned from personal experience, sometimes hard experience, students are tougher in their questioning than people you might talk to at a chamber of commerce or civic club. Being a professor is a challenge, I am sure.

She has worked for the Department of Business Regulation for the State of Utah. She was an adjunct professor, City College of Chicago, in West Berlin and Weisbaden, Germany. She also has a business on the side selling a line of women's clothes.

Beginning in 1982, she served as legislative assistant to Senator PETE

DOMENICI, as I noted. She was legislative director to Senator DOMENICI from 1985 to 1991. Obviously she developed and executed legislative strategies on a wide range of domestic and international issues, including tax reform issues, the omnibus trade bill of 1998, the United States-Canada Free Trade Agreement, and gained a lot of valuable experience in that position with Senator DOMENICI. She was counsel to the minority for the Senate Budget Committee where she worked the closest with Senator DOMENICI but a lot of Senators, Democrats and Republicans, learned to know her and respect her.

Finally, from 1992 to 1996, she was general counsel to the Senate Budget Committee, a committee that has played a huge part in what the Senate has done over the last 20 years. Keep in mind, we did not have a Budget Committee until the late 1970s because we never got around to having a process where we add up how much we take in and how much we send out. Senator DOMENICI deserves a lot of credit for us eventually moving for the first time in 30 years to balanced budgets in the late 1990s and early in this century. Right there beside him, time and time again, was Denise Ramonas.

As majority leader, you do have some staff turnover occasionally and when we had a retirement here on our floor staff in 2001, I stole, once again from Senator DOMENICI, a great staff member. Over the years I think I have acquired about three of Senator DOMENICI's former staff members, and Denise Ramonas became assistant secretary to the majority serving on the floor, keeping track of the flow of legislation, making sure Senators were properly notified, keeping track of the votes. It is a demanding job with long hours, dealing with a clientele that is not always pleasant. But she did it with a smile, with a radiant beauty and with a high intellect. She served in that position from 2001 to October the 10th, I believe, was her final day.

I wish nothing but the best for Denise as she goes forward into the rest of her life seeking other opportunities. I am sure she will find some good ones and it will be rewarding to her.

I also thank her for her dedicated service over the years to this institution, particularly her years on the Senate floor. She did a great job. I personally appreciated it. So to Denise and her loved ones, I say a fond adieu and a great deal of thanks for your service here. I hope she will stay in touch with the Senate, with the Senators, and maybe even we will find a way to call on her services again.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I want to thank the distinguished majority leader for setting aside time today for those of us who wish to share our tributes and thoughts regarding our colleague who, 1 year ago tomorrow, passed away in a tragic plane crash, Senator Paul Wellstone.

Paul was a friend of mine for over 20 years and my colleague, mentor, and partner here for the first 2 years of my term. It is hard to believe it was a year ago now that he boarded a small charter plane to go up to northern Minnesota and somehow, impossibly and horribly, it crashed as it was trying to land there. It was demolished by the impact and by a fire that killed all eight people on board—Senator Wellstone; his wife and partner of 39 years Sheila; his daughter Marcia; the associate chair of the Minnesota Democratic Party, Mary McEvoy; and two of Paul's trusted aides, Tom Lapic and Will McLaughlin; as well as the plane's two pilots.

I have felt deep sadness and futile anger many times as I have entered this Chamber during the past year and as I walk by Paul's desk—which to me will always be Paul's desk. I have always felt his absence at caucus lunches, committee hearings, and policy debates. Always I miss his courage, his eloquence, his passion, and his deep caring for other people and their well-being, especially for all the people who have most often been ignored or forgotten in the stampedes of the rich and powerful, which occur regularly around here.

Thousands of Minnesotans and other Americans have felt similar grief, despair, anger, hopelessness, and profound loss during this past year. No one in my lifetime has meant so much to so many people in Minnesota as Paul and Sheila Wellstone.

Paul once wrote that politics is not about left, right, or center; it is about speaking to the concerns and circumstances of people's lives. Paul practiced what he preached. He was both by gut instinct and by reasoned conviction a man of the people. The rich and the famous held no special sway over him. Senatorial trappings, perks, and offerings did not appeal to him.

Instead, he was drawn to the real people, everyday Americans going about their business in their homes, schools, farms, offices, and union halls. They were the people who aroused his personal passions and instructed his political purposes. Their misfortunes became his causes. Their injustices forged his remedies. Their hopes and dreams inspired his orations. He was their Senator, their champion, and their hero.

Paul liked to say he was the Senator for the little fellows, as he jokingly pointed at his own height. He may have been short, but he was in every other respect a big, big man, with a big heart, big ideas, big courage.

He became a towering political leader. His popularity and prestige were enormous in Minnesota, and they were growing nationwide, especially with people who were hungry for real leadership. Had he lived and had he won reelection, his star would be shining even more brightly than ever before, which is why the darkness surrounding his absence is so hard to bear for his family, his friends, and his followers.

His best was still to come. He understood, as he said, that people yearned for a politics that speaks to and includes them and that offers them something real. As Paul admonished his colleagues, especially those of us in his own caucus, the question is not how to communicate our agenda but whether we have an agenda worth communicating. Paul did.

Nothing illustrated better his greatness, his unfailing ability to rise up to the challenge, to summon his courage, and to act rightly than one of his last votes in the Senate a year ago. The Senate was about to begin its consideration of a resolution authorizing the President to initiate military action against Iraq. Paul was in the final weeks of a very tough reelection contest against my distinguished colleague from Minnesota who is presiding at this moment, and many of his friends and political advisers were urging Paul to support this resolution. Doing so, they said, would assure his victory. Voting against it, they warned, could seal his defeat.

Paul was still wrestling with this decision when an article appeared in one of the Capitol press reports which quoted an unnamed Senate aide as saying the Democratic caucus was trying to devise a political cover to help Paul and others in close reelections finesse this tough vote.

At a caucus meeting later that day, Paul was as furious as I had ever seen him. He wasn't seeking anyone's cover, he fumed. He had never tried to duck a difficult vote, and he refused to do so now. He finished by saying: Whether Minnesotans agree with my decisions or not, they know I am doing what I believe is right. If I lose that trust, I have lost everything.

He left the meeting and went straight to the Senate floor and gave a powerful speech announcing he would vote against any resolution which gave the President complete and unilateral authority to start the war in Iraq.

In the following days, his last days on Earth, Paul was the most relaxed and upbeat I had seen him since his reelection campaign began. He was, of course, delighted with what he said were poll numbers which had boosted his standing after making that speech but, more importantly, he knew he had done what he believed was right. Principle had again prevailed over expediency. His integrity, his courage to stand up for his convictions, and his inspiring eloquence in speaking the truth were the essence of what he offered to the voters of Minnesota, and he knew